

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSAL TO SUBSTITUTE THE GENERIC NAME
DRYADOPHIS STUART, 1939, FOR *MASTIGODRYAS* AMARAL, 1934.
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(see volume 20, page 230)

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Hobart M. Smith has just requested the Commission to suppress the generic name *Mastigodryas* Amaral, 1934, in favour of *Dryadophis* Stuart, 1939 on the assumption that the type (*danieli*) of the former is a specimen of *Coluber boddaertii* Sentzen.

Unfortunately, I cannot entirely agree with my honourable colleague's proposal, for the following reasons:

1. From a bibliographic standpoint, *Mastigodryas*, to define a tree-snake or whip-dryad (from Gr. *μίστιξ*, *γος*, whip + *δρύας*, a dryad or wood-nymph), was described in 1934 and it is not yet 50 years old. It was published in a respectable and widely circulated journal (*Mem. Inst. Butantan* 1934, VIII : 157–159), in strict conformity with every requirement for validity as set forth in Articles 8, 11 and 13 of the Code. The article in which it appeared bears not only an abstract in English but also is classified according to Dewey's system so as to make it easier for foreigners not versed in Portuguese to comprehend at least its meaning.

2. From a herpetological point of view, the type (*danieli*), being easily distinguishable from *C. boddaertii* in having a rather short tail (C. 70 p. vs. 101–112 p.) and dorsal scales without apical pits, cannot be included in the genus *Dryadophis* Stuart, 1939 (a substitute name for *Eudryas* Fitzinger, 1843, as revived by Stuart in 1932) in all the species of which the dorsal scales bear 2 apical pits and the number of abdominal scutes (ventrals + subcaudals) is much higher (285–311) than that in *danieli* (257).

Among the various groups of Colubrids formerly included by Boulenger (1894) in the genus *Drymobiis*, those bearing smooth dorsal scales may be easily told apart from a generic standpoint, thus:

1. Anal single *Drymoluber* Amaral, 1929
2. Anal divided 3
- 3a. Dorsals without apical pits; tail not long (C. 70 p.) *Mastigodryas* Amaral, 1934
- 3b. Dorsals with apical pits; tail long (C. 79–136) *Dryadophis* Stuart, 1939

By keeping apart the genus *Mastigodryas* Amaral, 1934, from *Dryadophis* Stuart, 1939, as we must on taxonomic grounds, we can better serve science. At the same time, by upholding but the main idea lying behind Prof. H. M. Smith's proposal, can we do justice to the merit of our colleague L. C. Stuart in devoting himself for so long a time to the revisionary study of such an important group of Neotropical ophidians.